



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:
JOHN M. CURRAN

Application No.: 10/613,539

Filing Date: 07/03/03

FOR: IMPROVED SYSTEM AND
METHOD FOR FACILITATING PIPE AND
CONDUIT COUPLING

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Arlington, VA 22313-1450

DECLARATION OF JOHN M. CURRAN IN
SUPPORT OF PATENTABILITY IN
RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION DATED
06/21/2007

EXAMINER: J. M. HEWITT

Art Unit: 3679

I certify that this correspondence is being
deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as first class
mail in an envelope addressed to: Hon. Commissioner of
Patents and Trademarks, P.O. Box 1450, Arlington, VA 22313-1450

MAILED 11/20/07
P.O. Box 1450, Arlington, VA 22313-1450
on 11/20/07
[Signature]

John M. Curran hereby declares as follows:

- (1) My name is John M. Curran. I am the inventor on the within patent application for Improved System and Method for Facilitating Pipe and Conduit Coupling. My address is 10560 Fern Street, Stanton, CA 90680. I make this Declaration in support of Response to Office Action dated 06/21/07 specifically in support of patentability of the invention in the within patent application. I make this Declaration upon personal knowledge and have first hand familiarity with the contents of this Declaration. If called as a witness, I could and would confidently and truthfully testify in accordance with this Declaration.
- (2) I have been engaged in the business of fitting and laying heavy pipe particularly in subsurface venues for 12 years. During that time, in connection with my

occupation, I have become familiar with the level of normal skill in the art in my field and I have become familiar with devices that have been or are in use in the field including devices for pipe coupling.

- (3) I have reviewed the references cited in the Office Action regarding the within patent application mailed 06/21/2007, and find them to have no pertinence to my invention. None of the references taken singly or in combination shows or suggests my invention. None of the devices in the references employs a thin, flexible, resilient retention ring as in my invention. My invention includes substantial flexibility with respect to size because my device does not need to be sized precisely to the dimensions of the screw in view of its resiliency and the manner in which it is placed on the screw to retain the screw loosely in the screwhole prior to permanent securing/fastening, my retention ring being placeable sideways or frontally on the screw—that is simply placed on the screw from the front or side of the screw. Upon being placed on the screw, my retention ring resiliently frictionally engages between a successive pair of threads on the screw, the result being that the screw is loosely held in the screwhole prior to permanent fastening by a nut engaging with the screw. In permanent fastening, my retention ring has no function whatsoever, its role being only to retain the screw loosely in the screwhole prior to permanent fastening by a nut.
- (4) Because of the shortcomings of existing devices stated in detail in my declaration dated December 1, 2006, of record herein, there has been a general dissatisfaction in my industry with devices retaining screws in place prior to finally securing them in pipe couplings, and my device has completely answered that problem and resolved it such that I have had very extensive success with my invention, both commercially and with respect to efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

- (5) The device shown in the O'Connor reference, U.S. Pat. No. 2,779,375 is an example of the difficulties with existing devices, and it is not pertinent to patentability of my invention. The O'Connor device uses a lock washer 20 which holds a threaded screw in place in a threaded workpiece by means of an annular flange 24 which engages with a skirt 18 on the screw. The lock washer 20 is axially resilient (Col. 2, line 70) and has a washer body which is very stiff, and when collapsed, will aid in prevent unwanted unscrewing. (Col. 2, Lines 28-30). This complicated agreement could not work for large pipes and screws and bolts in which my invention operates. All of the other devices in the references cited in the 6/21/07 Office Action either do not apply in the field in which my invention is used i.e. loosely holding together prior to securing screws placed between clamps for holding the pipes, or do not operate in the same way that my invention operates, i.e. engagement between successive threads by a resilient, thin member placed sideways or frontally on the screw and having no role or function in the permanent fastening/securement of the screw and nut.

I hereby declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed under penalty of perjury this 31st day of October, at Stanton, California.


John M. Curran